

III. REMARKS

- **STATUS OF THE CLAIMS**

Claims 1-8, 10, 15 and 16-18 are under examination upon entry of this amendment. Claims 1, 3-5, 7, 8, 10 and 15 are currently amended. Claims 2, 6, 12-15 are cancelled without prejudice. Claims 16-18 are newly added. No new matter has been introduced with the amendment.

- **REJECTIONS**

- **REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §112, Second Paragraph**

- **Examiner's position**

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 10, 14, 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The Examiner notes that the following terms are not clear:

“substantially small uniform sized” – such term is relative and it is not clear what is small:

“the nanoscale range” (10^{-9} m) – there is no range listed:

“polarizable” is not a definite statement, polarizable by what?

“compatible with petroleum-based products” – it is not clear which products.

- **Applicants' Response**

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 10, 14, 15 based in part on the arguments the above indicated terms are not clear, that no range for “nanoscale range” is listed, and that “polarizable” is not further clarified. While not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejection, but merely to advance prosecution of the present application. independent claim 1 as amended herein and dependent claims 3-5, 7, 8, 10, 16-18 do not include these terms, and therefore the Examiner's rejection is rendered moot.

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REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Applicants herein address the Examiner's 102(b) rejections in respect to the claims as set forth in the Examiner's Office Action.

- Examiner's Position

The Examiner stated that Claims 1 – 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Nakanishi '666, Geiser '448, Oshima '266. The applicants respectfully point out that presently only claims 1-8, 10, and 12-15 are pending in this application, and no other claims. The rejection of claims 1 – 18 is a blanket rejection without any details being given as to how each reference anticipates the rejected matter.

- Applicants' Response

Base Claim 1 in Respect of the Nakanishi '666, Geiser '448, and Oshima '266 references

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejections with respect to the Nakanishi '666, Geiser '448, or Oshima '266. references. In clear distinction to the references independent claim 1 as presently amended herein is directed to a reusable sorbing coalescing agent comprising a degradation resistant, self-cleaning particulate web material comminuted from an organophilic and hydrophobic polymer matrix; the irregularly shaped or ragged-edge material being capable of continuously adsorbing, coalescing, and desorbing a non-aqueous phase from a mixture with an aqueous phase; the particulate web material being at least in one dimension in a nano-scale range of 10^{-9} m.

The Applicants respectfully submit that none of the references cited by the Examiner disclose particulate web material that has at least one dimension in the nanoscale range of 10^{-9} meters. This scale affords the effective use of different forces such as electrostatic and Van der Waals in the sorption activity of the web materials.

For the reason described above, the Applicants respectfully submit that the reusable sorbing coalescing agent as set forth in independent claim 1 is not disclosed in the prior art of

record, Nakanishi '666, Geiser '448, or Oshima '266. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. paragraph 102(b) is respectfully requested.

Therefore the Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 1 is in condition for allowance.

- Dependent claims 3-5, 7, 8, 10, 16-18

The Examiner is respectfully directed to note that dependent claims 3-5, 7, 8, 10, 16-18 set forth additional novel features of the present invention.

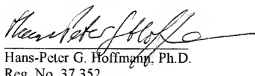
All dependent claims are in condition for allowance due to their dependency from allowable independent claim, as well as for the additional limitations set forth therein.

CONCLUSION TO REMARKS

Applicants assert that this response is fully responsive to the Examiner's Office action dated November 14, 2006. Applicants respectfully seek early allowance of the pending claims.

Respectfully Submitted,

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